



Every cancer. Every life.®

Colorectal Cancer Awareness Employer Toolkit 2026



Aflac is proud to sponsor the American Cancer Society Employer Wellness Toolkits.

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We thank Aflac for sponsoring this toolkit and supporting our shared efforts to raise awareness about the critical role cancer screening and early detection have in helping prevent and mitigate the impact of cancer. Learn more at cancer.org/Aflac.



How to Use This Colorectal Cancer Employer Toolkit

Your organization can help save lives by promoting colorectal cancer awareness and helping to deliver important messaging to your employees. At the American Cancer Society (ACS), we have a vision to end cancer as we know it, for everyone.

We are pleased to be working with your company to help your employees and their families take steps to help prevent cancer and better understand their cancer risk. This toolkit presents turnkey messages to effectively communicate the importance of colorectal cancer screening with your employees.

Messages highlight:



Colorectal cancer facts and statistics



Information about colorectal cancer screening



ACS resources for people with cancer

The toolkit is currently available only in English, but ACS does offer information about cancer, including prevention, early detection, treatment, and managing side effects, [in 13 languages](#). Additionally, our 24/7 Cancer Helpline is available to assist in more than 200 languages.

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Email and Newsletter Messages

Colorectal Cancer Facts



Company-wide emails and newsletters are effective ways to share messages with your employees. Use the following messages to help inform them about colorectal cancer and colorectal cancer screening.

Message #1

Learn the Facts About Colorectal Cancer

Colorectal cancer is a common cancer in the United States. Here are some key facts about the disease.

[What is colorectal cancer?](#)

- Colorectal cancer occurs when cells in the colon or rectum start growing out of control. The colon and rectum make up the large intestine (or large bowel), which is part of the digestive system.
- These cancers can also be called colon cancer or rectal cancer, depending on where they start. Colon cancer and rectal cancer are often grouped together. This is because they have many common features.

[How many people get colorectal cancer?](#)

- About 1 in 24 men and 1 in 26 women will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer in their lifetime.
- Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in both men and women in the US.

[How serious is colorectal cancer?](#)

- Colorectal cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death when numbers for men and women are combined. Colorectal cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in those younger than age 50.
- The death rate from colorectal cancer has been dropping in older adults for several decades. This drop is likely due to colorectal cancer screening and improvements in treatments.
- In people younger than age 55, however, death rates have been increasing about 1% per year since the mid-2000s.

The American Cancer Society® recommends that people [know their risk of colorectal cancer and get regular screening](#).

Visit the American Cancer Society website at cancer.org/coloncancer or call 1-800-227-2345 to learn more.

(Source: American Cancer Society)

Email and Newsletter Messages (cont'd)

Colorectal Cancer Facts (cont'd)



Message #2

Colorectal Cancer Awareness: Know the Symptoms

Colorectal cancer affects about 1 in 24 men and 1 in 26 women. [Knowing the signs and symptoms of the disease](#) can help you take charge of your health. You should talk with your health care provider if you notice any of the following symptoms.

Colorectal cancer might not cause symptoms right away. If it does, it may cause one or more of these symptoms:

- A change in bowel habits, such as diarrhea, constipation, or narrowing of the stool, that lasts for more than a few days
- A feeling that you need to have a bowel movement that's not relieved by having one
- Rectal bleeding with bright red blood
- Blood in the stool, which might make the stool look dark brown or black
- Cramping or abdominal (belly) pain
- Weakness and fatigue
- Unintended weight loss

Many of these symptoms can be caused by other conditions, such as an infection, hemorrhoids, or inflammatory bowel disease. Still, it's important to see a health care provider right away so the cause can be found and treated, if needed.

If you don't have any symptoms, ask your health care provider about your risk for colorectal cancer and when you should start [regular screening](#).

Visit the American Cancer Society® website at cancer.org/coloncancer or call 1-800-227-2345 to learn more.

(Source: American Cancer Society)



Tip: Instead of sharing just one message with employees, send multiple messages as an e-blast or newsletter series.

Email and Newsletter Messages (cont'd)

Colorectal Cancer Facts (cont'd)



Message #3

Colorectal Cancer Awareness: Know Your Risk

Everyone is at risk of developing colorectal cancer. But certain things can increase your risk for the disease. Understanding these risk factors can help you make better decisions for your health.

Colorectal cancer risk factors

[Some risk factors for colorectal cancer you cannot change.](#) These include:

- Getting older
- Being a certain race/ethnicity
- Being born male
- Inheriting certain gene changes
- Having a personal or family history of colorectal cancer
- Having a personal history of inflammatory bowel disease
- Having past radiation to the abdomen or pelvis area

Lifestyle and colorectal cancer risk

[Lifestyle factors can also affect your risk for colorectal cancer.](#) In fact, more than half (54%) of colorectal cancers in the US are caused by potentially modifiable risk factors. These include:

- Having excess body weight
- Not being physically active
- Having type 2 diabetes
- Eating a lot of red meats (such as beef, pork, or lamb) and processed meats (such as hot dogs and some lunch meats)
- Smoking tobacco for a long time
- Drinking alcohol

Ask your health care provider about your risk for colorectal cancer. Together, you can decide when to begin regular screening. You can also take the [ACS CancerRisk360™](#) assessment to learn more about what you can change to improve your health and lower your overall cancer risk.

Visit the American Cancer Society® website at cancer.org/coloncancer or call 1-800-227-2345 to learn more.

(Source: American Cancer Society)



Tip: To reinforce messages, host an educational event (guest speaker, health fair, etc.) for employees.

Email and Newsletter Messages (cont'd)

Importance of Colorectal Cancer Screening



Message #1

Colorectal Cancer Awareness: Recommendations for Screening

Are you age 45 or older? Then it's time to talk with a health care provider about getting screened for colorectal cancer.

Why get screened?

About 1 in 5 colorectal cancer cases are now in people ages 54 or younger. Colorectal cancer often doesn't cause symptoms until it spreads. That's why the American Cancer Society® recommends regular colorectal cancer screening for people at average risk starting at age 45.

Some people may need to start screening earlier. Or they may need to be tested more often. This could be the case if you have a family history of colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer or have other risk factors.

When colorectal cancer is found early, before it has spread, the 5-year survival rate is about 91%. This means 9 out of 10 people with early-stage colorectal cancer survive at least 5 years. If the cancer has spread, survival rates are lower.

What tests are available for screening?

A [colonoscopy](#) is often recommended because it looks at the entire colon. A screening colonoscopy can also prevent some colorectal cancers by finding and removing polyps (small growths that can cause cancer) before they turn into cancer. Colonoscopies are recommended every 10 years for people at average risk. You can view a [3D animation of a colonoscopy](#) on the American Cancer Society website.

[Stool-based tests](#) are another option that check for signs of colorectal cancer in the stool (feces). Stool-based tests can be done at home. These tests need to be done more often – either yearly or every 3 years – depending on the test.

If you choose a test other than colonoscopy, any abnormal test results should be followed up with a timely colonoscopy.

There are some differences between these tests to consider. **But the most important thing is to get screened.** Talk with your health care provider to find out which screening test is right for you.

Visit the American Cancer Society website at cancer.org/coloncancer or call 1-800-227-2345 to learn more.

(Source: American Cancer Society)



Tip: Share these messages during Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month (March).

Email and Newsletter Messages (cont'd)

Importance of Colorectal Cancer Screening (cont'd)



Message #2

Colorectal Cancer Awareness: Can Screening Benefit You?

Regular screening can help prevent colorectal cancer. It can also help find colorectal cancer early, when treatment is more likely to be successful. When people don't get screened on a regular basis, colorectal cancer can grow and spread without being noticed.

Unfortunately, about 1 in 3 people in the United States who should get tested for colorectal cancer have never been screened. This may be because they don't know that regular testing could help save their lives from this disease, or due to things like cost and [health insurance coverage issues](#).

Talk with your health care provider about screening.

People at average risk should start colorectal cancer screening at age 45. Some people with certain risk factors may need to start screening earlier. Talk with your health care provider to find out what screening plan is best for you.

You can also take the [ACS CancerRisk360™](#) assessment to learn more about what you can change to improve your health and lower your overall cancer risk.

Visit the American Cancer Society® website at cancer.org/coloncancer or call 1-800-227-2345 to learn more.

(Source: American Cancer Society)

Email and Newsletter Messages (cont'd)

Importance of Colorectal Cancer Screening (cont'd)



Message #3

Colorectal Cancer Awareness: Are You Due to Get Screened?

Did you know that regular screening can help prevent colorectal cancer? Screening can also help find colorectal cancer early, when treatment is more likely to be successful.

The American Cancer Society® recommends that people at average risk of colorectal cancer **start regular screening at age 45**. Several test options are available:

Stool-based Tests

- Can be done at home
- Low cost
- No bowel prep or sedation
- Done every year or every 3 years, depending on which test you do

If a person chooses to be screened with a test other than colonoscopy, any abnormal test result should be followed up with a timely colonoscopy.

Visual Exams

- Types of tests include colonoscopy or flexible sigmoidoscopy
- Done in a health facility
- Bowel prep needed
- Can remove and test polyps (small growths that can cause cancer)
- Done every 5 or 10 years, depending on which test you do

There are some differences between these tests to consider. **But the most important thing is to get screened, no matter which test you choose.**

You may be at higher risk of colorectal cancer if you have a family history or have certain health conditions. Ask your health care provider about your risk and if you should start screening earlier than age 45.

Visit the American Cancer Society website at [cancer.org/coloncancer](https://www.cancer.org/coloncancer) or call 1-800-227-2345 to learn more.

(Source: American Cancer Society)

Social Media Messages



Social media is another way you can raise awareness about colorectal cancer with members of your organization. Select social media platforms are mentioned below, but you can use these messages across other platforms, too.

LinkedIn

- Colorectal cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death in the United States. As employees of [ORGANIZATION NAME], let's do our part to help reduce the impact of this disease. The American Cancer Society can help you learn more about the disease and the importance of regular screening. Visit cancer.org/coloncancer for more information. #cancerprevention
- Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in both men and women in the United States. Do you know your risk? At [ORGANIZATION NAME], we encourage you to learn all you can about your personal risk for colorectal cancer and the guidelines for screening. The American Cancer Society can help. Visit cancer.org/coloncancer for more information. #cancerprevention

Facebook

- Make sure the important people in your life have the latest information about the early detection of #colorectalcancer. Being informed can help save lives! Visit cancer.org/coloncancer to learn more.
- Did you know there is more than one option for #colorectalcancer screening? If you're age 45 or older, ask your doctor about the available options for you. Visit cancer.org/coloncancer to learn more.

Instagram (captions to pair with posts)

- Are you or a loved one experiencing #colorectalcancer? @americancancersociety offers support programs for people with cancer and provides the information they need throughout their cancer journey. #everycancereverylife #youarenotalone
- Everyone is at risk for #colorectalcancer. But did you know your risk is affected by things like your age, family history, and other health conditions? @americancancersociety recommends talking to your doctor about when you should start regular screening. Schedule your appointment today! #everycancereverylife #youarenotalone



Tip: Connect with the American Cancer Society on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#) to reshare content for your employees and audiences.



Sharing Personal Stories

Many people who have been screened for colorectal cancer have a story to share. You can feature these stories in internal awareness campaigns.

Collect the following information:

- What is your name and age?
- Was this your first colorectal cancer screening?
- Why did you decide to get screened?
- Can you describe your experience?
- Would you like to share if the screening showed anything unusual?
- What would you tell people who haven't yet been screened?

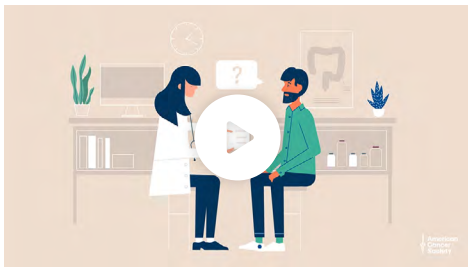
Story collection should be voluntary and only be done with people who have given their express permission. Story collection is subject to each company's applicable policies related to privacy and health information.



Tip: Lead by example! Ask executives and managers to share their own screening story or cancer journey.

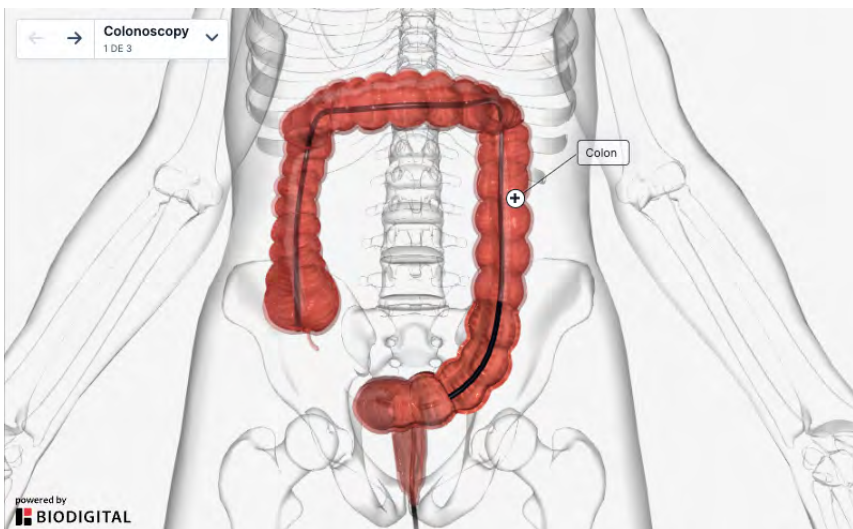
Colorectal Cancer Videos and Animation

Video and animation content can be an engaging way to share information about colorectal cancer.



Watch these videos to learn more about colorectal cancer screening options, including colonoscopy and stool-based tests. They are also available in Spanish.

<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/colon-rectal-cancer/colon-cancer-videos.html>



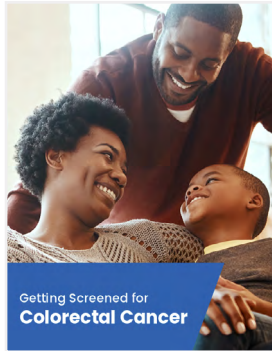
Explore a 3D interactive animation of a colonoscopy to see how a health care provider screens the colon and rectum for cancer. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/diagnosis-staging/tests/endoscopy/colonoscopy.html>



Tip: Embed these URLs within messages that you share with your employees.

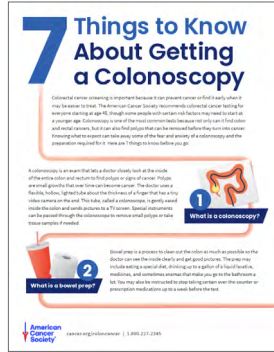
Colorectal Cancer Educational Materials

The American Cancer Society offers easy-to-read resources that are available to your organization.

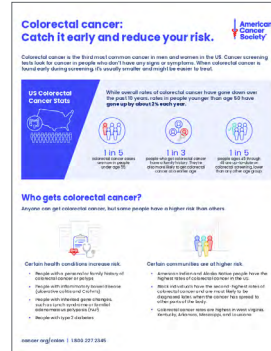


Getting Screened for Colorectal Cancer

[Getting Screened for Colorectal Cancer](#)



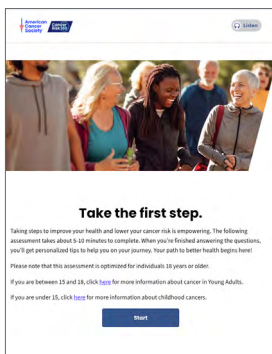
[7 Things to Know About Getting a Colonoscopy](#)



[Infographic: Colorectal Cancer: Catching It Early](#)



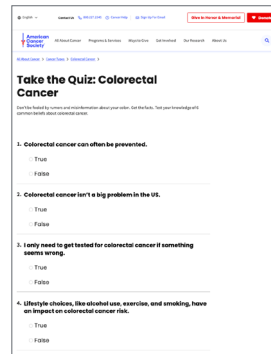
[You Can Help Prevent Colorectal Cancer](#)



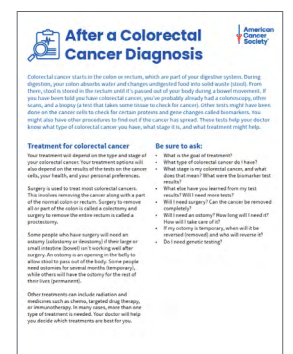
[ACS CancerRisk360™](#)



[Colorectal Cancer Fact Sheet for Patients and Caregivers](#)



[Take the Quiz: Colorectal Cancer](#)



[After a Colorectal Cancer Diagnosis](#)

Visit cancer.org/materials to print, email, or order educational materials.



Tip: In addition to sharing digital resources with employees, offer printed copies of these materials in your workplace.

American Cancer Society Resources for People With Cancer



Some of your employees may have cancer or may have a loved one with the disease. You can use these messages to familiarize employees with American Cancer Society [programs and services](#). They can help them through their cancer journey.

Message #1

The American Cancer Society offers cancer support, whenever you need it.

Have you or has someone you know been affected by cancer? Support is available through the American Cancer Society®. The organization offers resources to help with:

- [Getting rides to treatment](#)
- [Finding a place to stay during treatment](#)
- [Accessing easy-to-read cancer information](#)
- [Giving guidance to help manage your cancer experience or a loved one's](#)
- [Finding the right clinical trial for you](#)

When you visit the [American Cancer Society online](#), you have access to free, easy-to-understand cancer information in [13 languages](#) to help you find the support you need when you need it most. This information is available to help you make decisions during diagnosis, treatment, and beyond. In addition, our 24/7 Cancer Helpline is available to assist in more than 200 languages.

Visit the American Cancer Society website at cancer.org or call 1-800-227-2345 to learn more.

(Source: American Cancer Society)



Tip: Host a signup event for employees who may want to [volunteer](#) with the American Cancer Society.

American Cancer Society Resources for People With Cancer (cont'd)



Message #2

Connect with the American Cancer Society cancer community.

People with cancer and those who care about them don't have to face their cancer experience alone. Did you know that the American Cancer Society® can help? They offer support programs for people with cancer and provide the information they need throughout their cancer journey:

- [Cancer Survivors NetworkSM \(CSN\)](#): This is a safe online community where survivors and caregivers can share their stories, ask questions, and support each other. With a chatroom and over 40 discussion boards, CSN allows survivors to connect with others who have a similar cancer experience. Visit csn.cancer.org to find out more.
- [Road To Recovery[®]](#): Through this program, trained volunteer drivers donate their time and the use of their vehicles to provide people with cancer rides to cancer-related medical appointments. Drivers provide transportation to support people with cancer who can't drive themselves to appointments. Visit cancer.org/roadtorecovery to learn more.
- [Cancer information](#): Caring, trained American Cancer Society helpline specialists can answer questions to empower people with cancer with accurate, up-to-date information to help make educated health decisions. They can also connect people with cancer, caregivers, and family members with valuable services and resources. Services are provided 365 days a year via a toll-free helpline (1-800-227-2345) in English, Spanish, and more than 200 other languages through a translation service. Additionally, online live chat sessions are available in English on weekdays. Visit cancer.org/contact for more information.
- [ACS CARES[™] \(Community Access to Resources, Education, and Support\)](#): This mobile app provides people with cancer and their families curated content, programs, and services to fit their specific cancer journey. Users can access personalized, quality cancer-related information and resources that update as they age, a situation changes, or new information becomes available. Through the app, users can speak directly to American Cancer Society cancer information specialists or meet virtually with others who have gone through a similar experience. Visit cancer.org/acscares to learn more.
- [ACS ACTS[™] \(Access to Clinical Trials & Support\)](#): This comprehensive clinical trial matching service helps patients explore and connect with clinical trial options suited to their needs, while also offering wraparound services to overcome barriers related to lodging and transportation. Visit acts.cancer.org for more information.

Visit the American Cancer Society website at cancer.org or call 1-800-227-2345 to learn more.

(Source: American Cancer Society)



Tip: In addition to sharing these resources, create a “buddy” program that allows employees affected by cancer to support one another.



Get Involved

The American Cancer Society exists to improve the lives of people with cancer and their families. We invite you and your employees to join us to ensure everyone has a fair and just opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. You can find all the opportunities near you in the [American Cancer Society Volunteer Community](#).

Name	What they do	What you can do
Road To Recovery [®]	Provides transportation to treatment and other cancer-related appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become a volunteer driver. • Create safety travel kits for volunteer drivers.
Hope Lodge [®]	Offers free lodging to people facing cancer and their caregiver when treatment is far from home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help make meals. • Provide entertainment. • Ensure that guests feel welcome during their stay.
Community events like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relay For Life[®] • DetermiNation[®] Endurance Series • Men Wear Pink • Gold Together • Making Strides Against Breast Cancer[®] 	Promotes cancer awareness while engaging in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign up to lead or join a team. • Join a planning committee. • Volunteer your time to support an event through a one-day community giveback opportunity.
ACS CARES [™]	Empowers patients throughout their cancer journey by providing information and support through an app	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become a virtual community volunteer and exchange messages via the ACS CARES app with people throughout their cancer journey.

There are also virtual opportunities to give back:

- [Virtual Challenges](#)
- [Health Equity Ambassadors](#)
- [Advocate for Policy Change](#)
- [Employee Engagement With the American Cancer Society](#)